



PRESS RELEASE

Maryland Department of Human Resources

Maryland's Human Services Agency

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ADOPTION RATES TRENDING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, 19 OF 24 LOCAL JURISDICTIONS MEET OR EXCEEDED ADOPTION GOALS IN FY 2008

BALTIMORE – The Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) announced today as a result of its **Place Matters** initiative -- 19 of 24 local departments of social services met or exceeded their adoption goals in fiscal 2008. In fiscal year 2007, only five out of 24 local departments reached their goals.

A total of 617 Maryland children were adopted during fiscal year 2008. A total of 563 Maryland children were adopted during fiscal year 2007.

In part, DHR Secretary Brenda Donald credited Governor Martin O'Malley's StateStat program that establishes, tracks and evaluates the overall effectiveness of various state government agencies and the services they provide to residents. DHR began participating in the StateStat program in June 2007.

Donald called the numbers promising and said that they represent good progress on DHR's signature **Place Matters** initiative that has emphasized the importance of every child having a permanent place to call home.

"It's clear to me that our front-line social workers in the field are really pushing and implementing DHR's renewed focus on providing children permanent and safe places to live as quickly as possible," said Donald.

Maryland's mid-sized counties including Wicomico and Washington counties were among those seeing the greatest gains in adoptions.



• Martin O'Malley, Governor

• Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor

• Brenda Donald, Secretary

Wicomico County on the Eastern Shore set a goal to place 12 children in adoptive families during fiscal year 2008. Ultimately, 25 children were placed in adoptive families in Wicomico, representing a nearly 92 percent increase in the number of adoptions in that county over the prior year.

Washington County in Western Maryland set a goal to place 16 children in adoptive families during fiscal year 2008. Ultimately, 36 children were placed in adoptive families in Washington, representing a 177 percent increase in the number of adoptions in that county over the prior year.

For more information on adopting a child in need in any of Maryland's communities, call 800-39-ADOPT.

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